

# **Beating Retreat to bid farewell to the Stone of Destiny**

**A ceremony was held on Thursday at Edinburgh Castle to formally mark the transfer of the Stone of Destiny to Perth.**

Following a short speech by the First Minister in the Great Hall, pipers led a procession to the castle esplanade, where the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland performed a Beating Retreat. The weather was misty and rainy but the band played on.

The ceremony included First Minister Humza Yousaf, Dr Joe Morrow the Lord Lyon King of Arms, the Rt Hon Lord Provost of Edinburgh and The Governor of Edinburgh Castle, Major General Alastair Bruce, as well as other invited guests representing the “People of Scotland” including pupils from Strathallan School near Perth.

Piper Lance Sergeant Macrae from the Scots Guards, led the procession from the Great Hall playing the specially composed tune “The Return of the Stone”.

The Stone of Destiny – also known as the Stone of Scone – was used for centuries as a coronation stone for Scottish monarchs.

It was taken from Scone near Perth in 1296, and built into the throne of King Edward I at Westminster Abbey.

The Stone was officially returned to Scotland in 1996 and installed in the Crown Room at Edinburgh Castle, alongside the Honours of Scotland, the Scottish Crown Jewels.

Its return to Perth – as the centrepiece of the new Perth Museum when it opens to the public on March 30 – will mark the end of a 728 year absence.



The Lord Lyon said: “Aside from its journey to and from the Coronation in 2023, it has been housed within the Castle since 1996. It will soon make the journey to its new home in Perthshire.

“I pay tribute to the staff, past and present, of Historic Environment Scotland who have worked tirelessly to protect, care for, and showcase the Stone for the enjoyment of many millions of visitors to this Castle.

“I look forward to seeing the Stone again soon, in its new setting within the magnificent Perth Museum.”

The Stone of Destiny has been housed at Edinburgh Castle

almost continuously since 1996.

It was announced in December 2020 that it was to be given a new home. The move to Perth was announced by then-First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on behalf of the Commissioners for the Safeguarding of the Regalia, advisors to the late Queen who in turn gave her approval for the Stone's relocation.

The Stone will only leave Scotland for a coronation in Westminster Abbey, as happened when it was transported back to London last year for the coronation of King Charles.

Beating the Retreat is a military ceremony dating back to the 17th-century. It was first used to recall nearby patrolling units to their camp and would mark the cessation of daily fighting; the point where soldiers sheathed their arms and withdrew from the battlefield to rest.

Originally known as Watch Setting, it was often initiated at sunset by the firing of a single round from the evening gun. The ceremony has evolved today into a colourful pageant of military music performed by soldiers.

Historic Environment Scotland [HES], which cares for the Stone, said over 35 million people had visited Edinburgh Castle since it went on display there in 1996.

A spokesperson for HES said: "We've been delighted to house the Stone at Edinburgh Castle for over 25 years, and we're sure visitors will enjoy this new chapter in its long history."

HES has been working on a new display of the Honours of Scotland – the Crown of Scotland, Sceptre, and Sword of State, which are amongst the oldest crown jewels in Europe – alongside the new ceremonial "Elizabeth Sword".





















